

ROLE OF RELIGIONS IN THE TURKIC CULTURE

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Contents

Preface	9
DEWEESE, DEVIN: The Disciples of Aḥmad Yasavī among the Turks of Central Asia: Early Views, Conflicting Evidence, and the Emergence of the Yasavī Silsila	11
TURGUT, HALİL: The Role of Islam in Scientific Research: the Case of Turkish	27
DEMIRCIOĞLU, AYTEKİN: Causality Criticism of Turkish Islamic Philosopher Zamakhshari	39
WILHELMI, BARBARA: The Nestorians as Medical Scientists: Nestorian Christology and the Idea of Human Being (between 5th to 9th Century CE) in West Asia	49
RENTZSCH, JULIAN: Oghuz Versions of the Lord's Prayer	57
KOVÁCS, SZILVIA: A Franciscan Letter from the Crimea (1323)	85
ÜRKMEZ, ERTAN: The Formation of Mi'raj Narratives in Turkey	93
BALKANLIOĞLU, MEHMET ALİ: Marriage, Family and Islam in Contemporary Turkey: What Do Indicators Tell Us?	109
CHILMON, WŁADYSŁAW: Religion and Authority – Authority of Religion: the Case of Turkey	115
RÖMER, CLAUDIA: Comets as Bringers of Evil in 17th-Century Ottoman Belief	123
CsÁKI, ÉVA: Sufism in Alevi and Bektashi Culture in Turkey	141
GODZIŃSKA, MARZENA: Defining Cem Evi of Turkish Alevi – Place of Prayings, Place of Sacrum, Place of Gatherings, Place of Pleasures	149
EÖRDÖGH, BALÁZS: “Since the Sky and the Earth Mingled...” – A reconsideration of Tengrism	161

SOMFAI KARA, DÁVID:	
The Concept of 'Happiness' and the Ancient Turkic Notion of 'Soul'	171
GÖNCÖL, CSABA:	
'Abdu'l-Ġaffār Qırımī on the Religion of the Kalmucks	185
SKRYNNIKOVA, TATIANA:	
Rethinking the Meaning of the Theonim Umai	195
NEVSKAYA, IRINA:	
Ayna and Aza in South Siberian Languages	211
OLACH, ZSUZSANNA:	
Karaim Translations of the Song of Moses as Sources of Karaite Religious Concepts	227
SIPOS, JÁNOS:	
A Special Melody of the Bektashis in Thrace	243
MUKUSHEVA, RAUSHANGUL:	
The Shaman Archetype and the Features of a Mythological Mindset in the Works of Contemporary Kazakh Poet T. Abdikakimuly	251
ZULPYKHAROVA, ELMIRA:	
Funeral Customs of Contemporary Kazakhs	265
ÖZERTURAL, ZEKINE:	
Stand und Aufgaben der Erforschung des türkischen Manichäismus	273
VÉR, MÁRTON:	
Religious Communities and the Postal System of the Mongol Empire	291
DANKA, BALÁZS:	
About the Historical and Religious Context of the "Pre-Islamic" <i>Oyuz-nāmā</i>	307
NAZARI, ABDOLLAH – ROUTAMAA, JUDY:	
The Impact of Islam on the Language and Culture of the Turkmen People of Iran: A Sociolinguistic Perspective	321
SIBGATULLINA, GULNAZ:	
Found To Be on the Fault Line: Discursive Identity Construction of the Kriashens	333
CARLSON, CHARLES F. – DERBISHEVA, ZAMIRA K.:	
The Role of Kyrgyz Traditional Beliefs	345
KHABTAGAEVA, BAYARMA:	
Remarks on the Buddhist Terminology in Tuvan	359
TAZHIBAYEVA, SAULE:	
Kazakh Rites Connected with the Birth of a Child and their Reflection in the Language	375

GREZSA, BENCE:	
Notes on the Kazakh Religious Terminology	387
JUMAKUNOVA, GÜLZURA:	
Traces of Old Kyrgyz Beliefs in the Epic of Manas	401
LUNCZNER-SZABÓ, ÁGNES:	
Trepanations in the 10–11th Centuries	
in the Carpathian Basin and Its Magical Reason	409
CSIKY, GERGELY:	
Rites Related to Weapons in Avar-age Burials	415
PELER, GÖKÇE YÜKSELEN:	
Islamic Balbals of Ayyios Andronikos: Ethno-linguistic Notes	
on Some Tombstones Found in the Carpass Peninsula	423
KRASON, FERUZA – VOINOV, VITALY:	
Bible Translation into Turkic Languages in Post-Soviet Countries	441

About the Historical and Religious Context of the “Pre-Islamic” *Oğuz-nāmā*

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Abstract

The so-called “Pre-Islamic” *Oğuz-nāmā* is a Middle Turkic text written down probably in the Golden Horde possibly in the 15th century and is based on oral tradition. The article first argues that the above statement is true, then it will tend to resolve the apparent contradictions with it. Finally, some aspects of the religious ideology labelled as “Pre-Islamic” will be discussed.

Key words: *Oğuz-nāmā*, tengriism, Middle Turkic, Golden Horde, oral tradition

The “Pre-Islamic” *Oğuz-nāmā* (1) is a Middle Turkic text (2) written down probably in the Golden Horde (3) possibly in the 15th century (4) and is based on oral tradition (5). The initial statement of the present article can be divided to five parts (1-5), and I will discuss them in the given order. The text in question will be referred as PON throughout the article, based on the initials of the expression “Pre-Islamic” *Oğuz-nāmā*.

(1) The only manuscript of the PON is preserved in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, with the signature *Supplément Turc No. 1001*.¹ The manuscript consists of 21 folios (42 pages), 9 lines on each page up to a total of 376 lines. It is written in a simplified version of Uyğur (Mongolian) script. The manuscript is damaged by water on folios 10v, 10r, 9v, 9r (pages 23–26) and is torn in an increasing measure on the sides of folios 6–1 (pages 31–42). The damaged text is restored on folios 4r and 3v (pages 36 and 37) by a second hand, probably by a previous scholar who worked on the manuscript. The text of the manuscript has been published several times. Wilhelm Radloff’s edition of the *Kutadğū Bilig* (1890: 191–192) contains eight pages of the PON’s facsimile, and he translated it to German (1891: x-xiii) Riza Nour (1928) published the

¹ The high-resolution photographs of the manuscript are accessible at the homepage of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* at the URL address <http://expositions.bnf.fr/islam/gallitaltuc2.htm>. The photographs, however, are given in reverse order according to the plot. Thus, the text starts at folio 21v and ends on 1r. The reason for this is probably that the folios of the manuscript are (wrongly) numbered with latin numbers 1–21, starting from the end of the text. Here I refer to folios according to this numbering, but I refer to page numbers of the manuscript as they are correctly given in Ščerbak 1959.

text in printed Arabic script with latin transcription, and with French translation. Paul Pelliot (1930, Turkish translation: 1995) made critical comments on Riza Nour's edition. Willie Bang and Reşid Rahmeti Arat (1932, Turkish translation 1936) published the PON with transcription and another German translation, and made comments on the text. The newest edition of the PON is made by A. M. Ščerbak (1959), with transcription, Russian translation and with comments on the text.

The PON is labelled "Pre-Islamic" in opposition with several Muslim *Oğuz-nāmās*, which has overlapping plot with that of the PON. These Muslim versions are the following:

a) The *Oğuz-nāmā* found in Rašid ad-Dīn's *Ġāmī* at Tawāriḥ written in 1310–1311. The language of the work is Persian. The German translation of the part concerning us is published by Karl Jahn (1969), and the Turkish translation by Zeki Velidi Toğan (1972). This *Oğuz-nāmā* will be referred as RD.

b) 'Alī Yazījzāde's *Tevāriḥ-i Āl-i Selçuq*, written in 1423. The language of the Text is Ottoman Turkic, and is published by Abdullah Bakır (2008). This *Oğuz-nāmā* will be referred as YZ.

c) The so-called *Oğuz-nāmā* of Uzunköprü. The author and date of the text is unknown. The language of the text is Ottoman Turkic, and is published by Kemal Eraslan (1976). This *Oğuz-nāmā* will be referred as UK.

d) The *Oğuz-nāmā* found in Abu'l Gāzī Bahadur Khan's *Şejere-i Terākime* (1661) and *Şejere-i Türk* (1665). This latter has been finished by the order of his son after the khan's death. The two versions of the relevant part of the texts is only slightly different, they may practically be considered as identical. The language of the texts is Turkī (Chagatay Turkic). *Şejere-i Terākime* is published by Zuhul Kargı Ölmez (1996) and the *Şejere-i Türk* by Desmaisons (1970²). These *Oğuz-nāmās* will be referred as AG.

There is an Islamized ideological background in the above-mentioned works which can be summarized as the following: the protagonist *Oğuz* is born as Muslim. He visits his mother in her dreams, asking her to convert to Islam. Otherwise he would not suck milk from her breast and therefore he would die. Consequently, his mother does as he asks. *Oğuz* also asks her brides to convert to Islam, otherwise he wouldn't marry them. Only the third bride does so, and *Oğuz* marries her. Finally, *Oğuz* wages war against his father. His father declares war on him for leaving their 'old faith'.

The plot of the PON can be divided into five main parts. These are: a) the ideological background, b) the unique features of the PON which are not present in the Muslim version in such a detailed form as they are in the PON. c) stories of allied Turkic tribes (*Qipčaq*, *Qarluq*, *Qalač* and *Qangli*), which are present in all *Oğuz-nāmā* versions, but differ in detail from the PON, d) conquests of secondary importance in the PON, but which are present more or less detailed in almost all of the Muslim versions (except UK), and e) the dividing of *Oğuz*'s empire among his sons, which differ in detail in all the versions, and not present in UK.

The ideological background of the PON is completely different from that of the Muslim versions, and shows no reference to Islam. This part of the plot in the PON seems to be more archaic, and the other *Oġuz-nāmā* versions probably, but not necessarily, show a later influence of Islam.

(2) The lexicon of the PON contains loanwords of various origins. The greatest amount of them are copied from Mongolic (such as *nökär* 'companion, bodyguard', *buġu* 'male deer' *bandang* 'bench'. This latter is ultimately of Chinese origin *pan-teng* 'bench'). There is a smaller number of Persian loanwords in the text (*dost* 'friend', *dušman* 'enemy', *ataš* 'fire' and *badan* 'body' < Arabic *badan* 'body'). The presence of these loanwords undoubtedly dates the text after the 13th century and classifies it as Middle-Turkic, since Mongolic loanwords started to flow into Turkic languages in a great amount after the Mongolian conquest (Clauson 1962 [2005], 31). There are also a few loanwords of ultimately Sanskrit origin: *buyan* < *punya* 'merit' *nävsiki* < *naivāsiki* 'fairy'. This final group must belong to an older layer of loanwords, and are most probably copied from Sogdian, thus their takeover must have happened in the Old Turkic period.

There are a few phonetic features present in the language of the text which must be mentioned here. Possibly under Mongolic influence, the language of the PON shows word-initial /y-/ (marked with the grapheme <y>) ~ [j-] (marked with <č>) alternation. Examples include *yalġuz* ~ *jalġuz* 'alone', *yaruq* ~ *jaruq* 'light (beam)' and *yarliq* ~ *jarliq* 'order, decree'. The form *jarliq* may be read as *jarliġ* as well (the orthography of the text does not make clear distinction between [q] <q> and [ġ] <q̃>). In this case, *jarliq* may also be considered as a copy from Mongolic (in which the word is an older copy from Old Turkic).

An archaic phonetic feature is the preserve of Old Turkic /d/ in intervocalic and word final positions. The orthography marks these sounds with <d>: *ud* 'ox', *aduġ* 'bear', *adaq* 'foot', *quduġ* 'river bank' (< Old Turkic *qidiġ* 'edge, rim', not mix up with *quduġ* 'well'), and *bädiik/bediik* 'great'. Interestingly, the /d/ > /y/ sound change takes place in pre-consonantal position, such as *uyqu* 'the act of sleeping' < **udġu* < **udī-ġu*, from OT *udī-* 'to sleep' ~ *udīq* 'sleepy, asleep', *ayġir* 'stallion' < OT *adġir*, *qayġu* 'sorrow' < OT *qadġu*. One would expect that consonants change more easily in intervocalic position, and are more stable in pre-consonantal position, but it is obviously not the case here.

(3) Remaining at phonetic changes, but moving forward to the next part of our initial statement, we need to discuss the following problem. The most striking orthographical feature of the text of the PON is that in the vast amount of cases, the etymological non-open illabial vowels (/i/ and /i/) are very often spelled with *aleph* <y> instead of *yodh* <y>. Similar phenomenon has been already attested in Old Turkic in certain words, suffixes, or in certain phonetic environments, see Erdal 2004: 43-44, 91. However, this phenomenon in the PON is much more extended, and is not limited to certain phonetic environments: it may happen in word stems, suffixes, in front and back vocalic

environment, and before any type of consonants. In the case of back /i/, the spelling with <'> is valid in the clear majority of cases, in the case of front /i/, one can see a greater proportion of fluctuation. The pattern is quite clearcut. The limitations of space here do not allow us to go into the details (for those see Danka 2014), but briefly, my assumption is that this unusual way of spelling points to the fact that the vowels in question are reduced and/or centralized, and the way of they are spelled is due to the imperfect inventory of the Uygur script to cover the vowel system of a(ny) Turkic language(s). If we accept that the change of spelling of certain vowels also show the actual change of the vowels' qualities compared to Old Turkic, and search for similar changes attested in modern Turkic languages, we will find that similar (may be not identical though) vowel changes occurred systematically in Volga Kipchak languages, by 1) closing of the etymological mid-vowels and 2) consequently, centralization and reduction of the etymological closed vowels in order to preserve the phonological opposition.

The following table sums up the shift of vowel system of the Volga Kipchak languages, and the way of spelling of the certain vowels as it is attested in the PON. The "unusual" spellings are underlined>.

Table 1. Volga-Kipchak vowel system in Uygur script

2. centralization	/i/ > /ě/ <y>/<'>	/ü/ > /ö̃/ <w>	/ĩ/ > /ĩ̃/ <y>/ <'>	/u/ > /ö̃/ <w>/<'>
1. closing	[e] > /i/ <y>/<'>	/ö/ > /ü/ <w>		/o/ > /u/ <w>
	/ä/ <'>		/a/ <'>	

This may mean that the PON is a monument of some kind of 'Old Volga Kipchak dialect', however, there are certain problems here to connect it to modern Volga-Kipchak, including distance in time, unintelligible sociolinguistic and areal linguistic factors, etc.). In any case, this fact gives us a hint to locate to the place of the PON's writing down to the Volga-region which used to belong to the Golden Horde.

Further data to support this assumption is the following: The unique features of the plot (mentioned above) also point to the same location. These unique parts of the PON are the most important part of it, because these show the deviation of the local version from the core tradition as they are added to the local version later. Thus, these represent the most recent part of the text.

The story of the submission of *Urus Beg*' son to *Oğuz Qağan* is not included in the Muslim *Oğuz-nāmās*. The story is briefly the following: *Oğuz Qağan* wins the battle near the river *Etil* (Volga) against *Urum*. *Urum*'s brother, *Urus Beg* sends his son into a fortified city and tells him to protect it. In the Turkic text, the phrase *saqla-p kel-gil* (protect+CONV.PR.F come+IMP.Sg.2 'protect it,

then come') is used. OĖuz marches against that city and when he arrives, *Urus*'s son tells OĖuz what he was told by his father, then submits to OĖuz offering his *qut* (regal charisma). OĖuz accepts it and tells the boy *baluq-ni yaqši saqla-p sen* (city+ACC good protect+CONV.PRF you 'you have protected the city well'), and gives him the name *Saqlap*. This interpretation of the name *Saqlap*² is clearly a folk etymology, but the story is a legitimisation narrative over the Eastern-European steppe becomes an organic part of the local tradition. This whole story with its preliminaries comes approximately to one third of the whole text, and can be easily be claimed to be in the focus-point of it. Moving one step further, I would say that writing down this OĖuz-nāmā version was motivated by the intension to include these events. Or, one can say that the PON is a Turkic legitimisation narrative over the Eastern-European steppe wrapped into an OĖuz-nāmā, to make it acceptable for the intended audience, whoever it was.

I would like to draw attention to another motif in the PON which is not present in the Muslim versions. At the eve before the battle against *Urum*, a gray male wolf steps out from a beam of light in OĖuz's tent, and offers its help. Later it appears several times and leads the way to OĖuz and his army. Although a similar folk etymology as for the name *Saqlap* is not built up explicitly, there is a possible parallelity between this motif and the folk etymology of the ethnonym *Bashkir* from *bašqort* 'leader wolf' (*baš* 'head' + *qort* 'wolf'). The ethnonym itself is not mentioned in the PON, but YZ and AG mentions them as *Bašgird* and *Bašqird* respectively. The wolf is referred to as *böri* in the PON and not as *qurt*, but the abovementioned folk etymology cannot be deduced from *böri*. This may be a reason why it is not mentioned explicitly.

In any case, the shift of the vowel system of the text and the unique part of the plot with *Urum*'s submission support each other in that the handing down the text should be located to the Eastern-European steppe-region.

(4) About the age of the text Pelliot (1930 [1995], 96-103) supposes that the PON as a manuscript has been written down in the 15th century in the 'western part of the Turkic world', and the manuscript in hand is based on a lost original (written probably in the 14th century). Thus, the PON would be a "reedited" copy, and according to the language of the text, this reedition happened in "Kirgiz territory" (Kirgiz meant Kazakh according to the contemporary scientific terminology, while Kirgiz proper had been referred to as Karakirgiz). Ščerbak (1959: 101-107) basically agrees with Pelliot, but he also adds that the original manuscript was probably in Arabic script. He calls the language of the PON 'Karluk-Uygur'.

² In the Muslim sources the name *Saqlap/Saqlab* means the *Slavs* in the narrow sense, and the forest-dwelling peoples of Eastern Europe in a wider sense (Zimonyi 1990, 73-75; Zimonyi 2005, 59). The name is a Turkic copy of the Arabic *Šakāliba*, Sg. *Šaklabī/Siklabī* which is a copy itself from Middle-Greek Σλάβος. This latter can be connected to the self-designation of the Slavs (*Slověne*, *Slovjane*) (Golden 1995, 872).

What we find in the PON, giving us another hint for dating the text is the following: immediately after the submission of *Saqlap* to *Oğuz*, we find the stories of the allied Turkic tribes in the following order: *Qipčaq*, *Qarluq*, *Qalač* and *Qangli*. Each of them is a story to interpret the tribal names with a folk etymology. The story of the *Qipčaq* is the first, it is the closest to the central part of the text. Although at this part the manuscript is damaged, the story can be reconstructed as the following: *Oğuz* arrives to the river *Etil* (the second time, but the *Etil* is introduced as if it wouldn't have been mentioned before). *Oğuz* does not know how are they going to cross the river with the army. There is a man among the soldiers, who is named *Uluğ Ordu*. There are a lot of twigs and branches on the river bank. The text is unfortunately damaged exactly at this point, but presumably the *beg* ties the twigs (cf. Old Turkic *qavış-* 'to come together, assemble' and *qavır-* 'to bring together, collect', both derived from a hypothetical verbal stem **qav-* 'to put together' which presumably might be the base of the folk etymology here) and builds rafts, so they can cross the river. They do, and *Oğuz* gives *Uluğ Ordu* the name *Qipčaq* and the title *beg*.

The above story of the *Qipčaq* is included in the Muslim *Oğuz-nāmās*, but the story is different there: the folk etymology is based on the word meaning a hollowed tree (*qabūq* or *qipčaq*). This story of the *Qipčaq* in its form as it appears in the PON again points to the Eastern European steppe as a location. More importantly, the name *Uluğ Ordu* gives us an approximate time for the dating of the PON: The meaning of the name *Uluğ Ordu* is "Great Horde" (Trepavlov 2010, 7), which was the name of the central territories (including the Volga-region) of the dissolving Golden Horde in the first half of the 15th century, populated with Kipchak-speaking Turkic tribes. Thus, the PON may have been written in this time.

(5) We saw that the PON interprets contemporary events with an *Oğuz-nāmā* organized around an archaic core plot. The text consists of consequent prosaic and versed parts. Some motifs are more highlighted, while other motifs are not emphasized so much (the conquests of *Sindu* i.e. India, *Tangğut*, and *Šām* i.e. Damaskus or Syria), or rather obscure or mixed up with other motifs, which are more elaborated in the Muslim versions. For example, the conquest *Mīsīr* (i.e. Egypt), is unified with the black people of *Baraq*, while these two are treated separately in the Muslim versions: *It Baraq* and the land of darkness shows up at a different point of the story from the conquest of Egypt. The reason for this is that the *Oğuz-nāmās* are based on a wide-spread oral tradition. The deviation of the PON from the Muslim versions (and that of the Muslim versions from each other) can be explained with a homeostatic feature of the oral tradition: The storytelling focuses on the events which are relevant for the contemporary present, and those which are not relevant, slowly wilt and sink into oblivion (Ong: 1982, 31–55).

There are some interesting overlapping details between the PON and AG's *Oğuz-nāmā*, which are slightly different at RD and YZ. First of these is the folk

etymology of the tribal name *qanqaluğ* (PON) and *qangli* (AG) respectively. The story of these interpretations is concisely the following: After a battle, the army of Oġuz gains such a vast amount of booty, that they can not carry it. A man of the army builds a cart (which is designated with onomatopoieic word *qanqa* in the PON and *qang* at AG), and loads on the booty, becoming able to carry it. All the people do the same thus the problem is solved. For this deed, Oġuz gives the man the name *Qanqaluğ/Qangli* 'one who has a cart'. At RD and YZ both the cart and the man is called *Qangli*, which is a slight, but important difference between PON/AG and RD/YZ. The other such detail is the connection of the tribal name *Uygur* with milk or koumiss. AG connects these two explicitly, but his interpretation is quite forced. In the PON, Oġuz's second wife is described with a metaphor related to milk, and not much later, he declares himself as the *Qağan* of the *Uygur*. The connection between them is not explicit, but can be understood through AG's interpretation, who seemed to feel important to emphasize it for some reason.

AG explicitly declares that he used written and oral sources during the compilation of his work(s). The second mentioned detail tells us that he did not know the PON as a written text, but the first detail shows that he drew on from the same pool of oral tradition from which the PON stems from.

The oral character of the PON is quite clear. Now let us briefly return to Pelliot's assumption that the manuscript is a copy and has been "reedited". Theoretically we cannot exclude the possibility that the PON is a copy, and there has been a lost original, but this assumption is not necessary at all. I would rather suppose that such an original had never existed, but the source was present in oral form. Thus the "reedition" phase can be skipped, rather the legend has simply been told in a different way. This would mean that the PON is an autographic text. The scribe and the storyteller also didn't need to be the same person. This has been already proposed by Sümer (1959, 388–389) and Clauson (1964, 17), who both assumed that a *baχši* (scribe skilled in Uygur-Mongolian script) wrote down the text listening the performance of (a)Turkmen bard(s). The hypercorrectly spelled words mentioned above support this assumption indeed, but I argued above that the performer (whose language is conserved in the text) was not Turkmen, but speaker of Kipchak dialect.

Figure 1. illustrates how I imagine the interrelatedness of the different Oġuz-nāmā versions to each other. The figure can be easily adapted to a real map of Middle Asian and the Eastern European steppe-region.

Now I consider my initial statement verified, but there are some problems arise with it immediately. The first Muslim convert among the Chinggisid rulers was Berke Khan (ruled between 1257–1266), so the conversion of the elite of the Golden Horde started already in the 13th century (for the historical details of Berke's conversion see Vásáry 1990, and Vásáry 2013, 166–168). The wide-range conversion to Islam started half a century later under the rule of Özbek Khan (ruled between 1312–1341), thanks to intensive Sufi activity in the Golden Horde. An important source about Özbek's conversion is Ötämiš

Hājji's conversion narrative. DeWeese (1994) describes this source as a kind of religious propaganda, where the scenery of the events is well harmonised with the symbolism of the local belief system. That harmonization is similar to the way of the PON's claim of supermacy over the Eastern European steppe, performed in the disguise of an *Oğuz-nāmā*. But if we assume that the PON was written down in the Golden Horde roughly a century later than the start of its wide-range Islmaization, how is it possible that we do not find Muslim motifs or any reference to Islam in the PON?

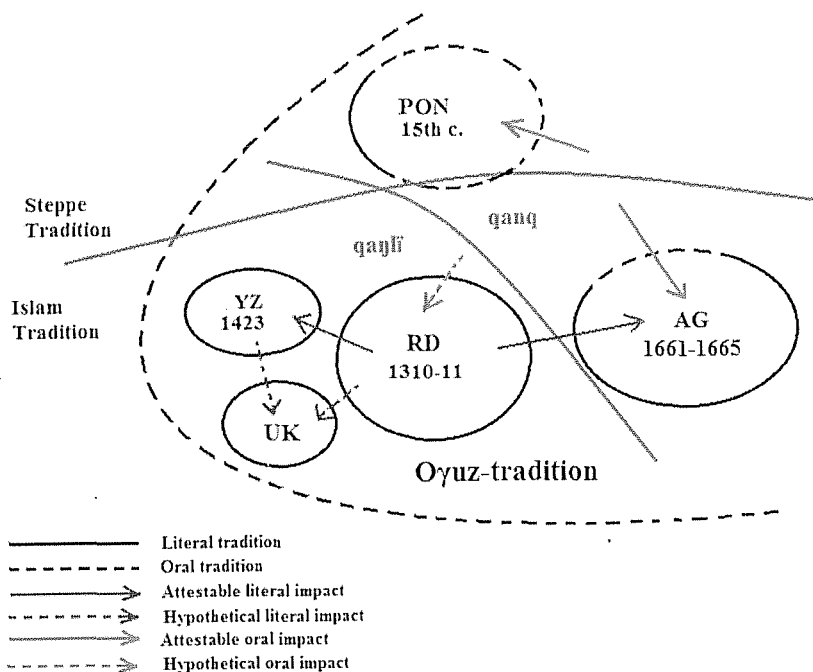


Figure 1. The interrelatedness of the different *Oğuz-nāmā* versions.

Parallely with the question of the religion, we need to deal with the question of the script of the PON. During their history, the Turks acquainted with new scripts mostly with the introduction of new religions among them. The case was the same in the Golden Horde. In the 13th and 14th centuries the Uygur script was in use, but it slowly submitted to the Arabic script from the 14th century on, until the 15th century, with the spread of Islam (Vásáry 1987). We have only two texts in Uygur script from the Golden Horde from the end of the 14th century, namely Toqtamış's *yarliq* (1393) and Tämür Qutluğ's *yarliq* (1397), the latter with interlinear Arabic script. Ščerbak notes in his edition of the PON (1959, 16) that the orthography of the PON resembles to that of the

former. There is proof that the Uyğur script was still in use - although sporadically - in the 15th century in Russian documents (Vásáry 1987).

At first glance, it seems contradictory that such a (possibly) late text as the PON is written in Uyğur script in the Golden Horde, since the script was already replaced by Arabic script in the chancellery. However, let us recall that the Arabic script spread with Islam, and the PON is a Non-Islamic text. The PON is an important source as it might be a proof that the Uyğur script was still used in the Golden Horde in the 15th century for writing down Turkic texts.

Now let us turn to the question of the religion in the PON. Although it is not a religious text in the strict sense, we can find an echo of a worldview in it. However, it is not easy to decide what can be marked as a religious terminus technicus in the lexicon of the PON, the following selection of them might be unambiguously considered as religious terminology:

There is a set of Turkic words and expressions, like *kök tängri* 'Blus Sky', *kök tängrigä ötä-* 'to carry out obligations to the Blue Sky', *tängriñi jalwar-* 'to beg, to pray to God/Sky' and *qut* 'life force, regal charisma'. There is a set of words of foreign origin such as *nävsiki* 'fairy' (← Sanskrit *naivasiki*), *buyan* 'merit' (← Sanskrit *punya*) and *tüšimäl* 'seer, soothsayer' (← Mongolic *tüšimäl* 'official, functionary') This latter is very interesting. In the PON – based on the context – it seems to be implicitly connected with *tüš* 'dream' with folk etymology. Based on these elements of the lexicon, one thing is sure: some kind of religious worldview is present in the PON, and most important keywords of 'Tengriism' are among them. Now let us recall that there are loanwords of Persian origin in the text, see point (2) above. These loanwords designate common concepts and they do not belong to religious terminology. Persian loanwords flowed into Turkic languages with the spread of Islam. Their presence in a non-Islamic text show that the author's dialect already contained these words, thus the cultural environment was under the influence of Islam. The author must have at least heard about Islam, even if he was not Muslim himself.

Let us stop for a while at this point, and consider the following citation of the text (page 12, lines 7–9), when *Oğuz Qağan* sends his self-declaration as world ruler to the four corners of the world, and demands submission from those who receive it: *män uyğurnıñ qağanı bola män kim yerning tört bulungıñunıñ qağanı bolsam kārük turur* 'I shall be the Kaghan of the Uyğur, thus I must be the Kaghan of the four corners of the world'. The word *uyğur* here seems to be similar connotation of 'buddhist', thus 'non-Muslim' like it is described by DeWeese (1994, 88–89) Although the word appears only once in the PON in the cited sentence of the protagonist, it is possible that the author of the text used this word to consciously emphasize the non-Muslim character of the protagonist as opposed to the Muslim Oğuz-nāmās. Dobrovits's (2010, 217) surmise about the PON whether it is a 'symbol of resistance of a hidden anti-Islamic party' seems legitimate at this point, with the correction that it is to be understood to the Golden Horde, not 'the Western part of the former Chagatai empire'.

Now let us further examine the worldview being echoed in the PON. A dual opposition can be set of these traits in our text in multifold aspects, which can be followed throughout the whole text. This opposition is based on the semantic connotations of the two words denoting two colours. The first one is the *kök* 'blue', hence, 'sky'. The other one is *qara*, 'black', and has a secondary meaning 'land, earth'. The word *kök* strictly co-occurs with some aspect of light. The examples are the following:

When *Oğuz* is given birth, his mothers eyes shine (*közi yaru-*), and the child's complexion is described as *kök* 'blue' (page 1, lines 3–6). At the description of the people of Baraq under the rule of *Mis'ir Qağan*, their complexion is *qap qara* 'jet black' and the same phrase is used to describe them as for *Oğuz* (page 33, line 7–page 34, line 3).

Oğuz's first wife descends from the sky in a beam of light, and her beauty is described with metaphors related to the macrocosmos (page 6, line 6–page 7, line 8), while his second wife occurs in a hollow tree between two rivers and her beauty is described with metaphors referring to objects to the microcosmos (page 8, line 9 – page 9, line 8). The name of their children preserve this opposition: Sun, Moon, and Star (page 8, lines 3–6), and Sky, Mountain and Sea, respectively (page 10, lines 4–7). This opposition sets up a hierarchy, which will be realized later, when *Oğuz* symbolically divide the empire between them: the elder sons will form the right wing, and they will give the ruler (page 39, line 1–5), while the younger sons will form the left wing, providing the ambassadors and executors of the will of the rulers (page 40, lines 2–4). The verification of this hierarchy is also described during their denomination as *Bozoq* 'Broken (bow)' and *Üč Oq* 'three arrows', at the scenery of the feast (page 40 line 7, page 41 line 8).

The Blue or Gray wolf also occurs in the story as it steps out from a beam of light (page 16, lines 1–6). So, we see a complete and closed system which's essence can be grabbed as the opposition between superior and inferior.

In a lecture made by Ščerbak in 1993, some of these motives, the light, the wife, and the gray wolf were considered as Mongolic impact on the text based on some parallels found in the Secret History of Mongols. I don't think that this is the case. The colour blue and its connotation sky, played important role already in the earliest written Turkic texts, the runic inscriptions. Since light co-occurs only with the colour blue in the PON, and since the other motives mentioned above are connected to this system, they cannot be due to Mongolic impact, but rather we must assume that these motifs belong to a common steppe tradition shared by both Turks and Mongols. As such, these motifs really do represent the most archaic core of the plot of the PON, pointing back to Pre-Islamic times. The dual opposition in which one side co-occurs with light, may be connected with the worldview observed in Manichaeism in some way.

In the Muslim versions, Islam partly disrupts this system, and replaces the blue and sky motives with Islam. The opposition becomes Muslim vs. *qara* (there meaning non-Muslim) and has effect all the connected motifs. It also

becomes the motivation for wars and conquests in the Muslim versions. This disruption can be easily the cause why the description of the birth of the children of OĖuz are omitted from the other Muslim versions: There can be no two wives to give birth for the two series of children, however their names of the children and their later hierarchy are preserved.

Finally, it can be claimed that Islam and 'Tengriism' has long coexisted in the Golden Horde, despite the wide-range Islamization starting from the 14th century. However, another important question still to be asked: Since the legitimisation of the Golden Horde and all its successor states were based on Islam, who was the one who dared to challenge its authority with such a text and why? In other words: who was the author and who was the intended audience of the PON?

ABBREVIATIONS:

ACC	accusative case
AG	see Desmainsons 1970 ² among the references
CONV.PRF	perfective converb
IMP.Sg.2	2nd person singular imperative
PON	see references
RD	see Jahn 1969 among the references
UK	see Eraslan 1976 among the references
YZ	see Bakır 2008 among the references

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